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((	November 30, 1991                      Issue #91-50
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((	~ Reporter.....Mike Brown
((	~ Assistant News Editor.....Mike Davis

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Z\*NET SUPPORT SYSTEMS - USA:

Z\*NET - (908) 968-8148  
CCBBS - (609) 451-7475  
THE GARAGE - (618) 344-8466

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\* EDITORS DESK by Ron Kovacs

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\* SPECIAL CHICAGO COMPUTERFEST BY ATARI ISSUE \*

Hope your Thanksgiving weekend has been enjoyable and you ate your share of the bird. I know I did and still feel full! Sheesh!!

Starting next week we begin our annual Year In Review series. This year we have changed the format and have some surprises planned. If you would like to participate please leave email!

Also, next week we will include the transcript of Greg Pratt's speech at the Chicago ComputerFest, and more news from the show.

Happy Holidays!

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\* CHICAGO COMPUTERFEST REPORT by Mike Brown, President- LCACE

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newsletters as long as the entire text is kept intact. Other use must be approved by LCACE, Atari Corp. and Z-Net Online.

As most of you probably know, last weekend the Chicago ComputerFest by Atari was presented jointly by LCACE and Atari Corp. Before I get into talking about details of the show that most likely won't be covered in other reports, I'd like to take a moment and praise LCACE's Special Events Chairman, Larry Grauzas, and the members of the Chicago ComputerFest organizing committee (in no particular order): Dwight (JJ) Johnson, Steve Kostelnik, Dave Moriarity, Joe Julian, Larry Grauzas Sr. and Steve Yeaton. These gentlemen, (and their families) put their personal lives, non-show interests, and in some cases, their jobs, "on hold" for months to assure that we would have a professional and well presented show for all of you. I have nothing but praise and admiration for the fine performance shown by all of "our people" involved.

I would be remiss if I did not call your attention to the significant contributions made by our sister Atari User Groups - MilAtari (gaming area), MAST (security), RACC (8-bit and staff), SCAT (staff), and GCACE (staff). The 9 member groups of the Midwest Atari Regional Council (ACE St Louis, ASCII, BLAST, CUSTUG, EAUG, IMAGE, MDC-RCC, PAUG and STar) also contributed significantly by supplying volunteer labor for set-up, breakdown, and day-of-show activities; not to mention sponsoring the first annual MARC Excellence awards (more on that later).

Those of you out there who believe in "no Atari support", should have been there to help unload the two truckloads of computers, display equipment, literature, promotions and handouts that Atari sent to the show site.

Each and every volunteer worker reporting to the Ramada convention center Friday night for show set-up nearly fell over with the sheer volume of equipment sent by Atari to be loaned to exhibitors or intended for show sales stock. Added to that were the nice cloth patches and other promotional items provided to the show by Atari for the attendees (was there anything left in Sunnyvale, Bob?).

Atari Corp. supported our efforts to get the news of the show out to the general public by sponsoring a LYNX giveaway contest on WLUP radio's "Steve and Gary" show, "Chet Coppuck on Sports", as well as the award-winning "Jonathon Brandmeier" morning show. In addition, we placed newspaper ads in all of the local college papers, and well-designed ads appeared in the "Friday" section of the Chicago Tribune (thanks Dave!). Our advertising budget alone for this show eclipsed the total show budget of both prior LCACE- sponsored AtariFests.

In addition to hardware, Atari provided over 25 Atari employees. They were not nameless folks either; Greg Pratt, Geoff Earle, Mark Campbell, Bill Rehbock, Mike Groh, Mike Fulton, Bob Schuricht, Art Morgan, James Grunke, Don Mandell, Sue Ruck and Don Thomas all joined Fest-meister Bob Brodie in working the show (just to drop a few names). The Atari staff didn't just stand around and "look cool" either - they were clearly in attendance to "take care of business", and did just that!

Greg Pratt was particularly impressive, always having time for even the smallest of questions posed by the show-goers. I saw Mr. Pratt in attendance at many of the seminars, including sitting in on the DTP hands-on classes (more about that later too!). I was left with the impression that Mr. Pratt cared very much about the success of this

show, and truly enjoyed being in attendance - Mr. Pratt is truly "one of us" and we should be happy that under his guidance Atari Corp. is willing to take significant risks, like the Chicago ComputerFest.

Atari Corp's display - taking up a full 60 feet of floor space, was dominated by the same professional display stands as used at COMDEX and CEPS. All manner of professional solutions were shown in this area - there was an Atari representative or Atari business partner at each workstation smiling and offering assistance to the attendees.

Somewhat of an unexpected surprise for most show-goers was the showing of Atari UNIX system V running on the TT030. Art Pruzynski and Diane Gurrero of Atari's UNIX team were in attendance to show off their progeny. I only got a peek at UNIX on the TT - but it looked quite complete. BTW - the version being shown is the UNIX version currently being shipped to developers.

Nearby, the Atari Entertainment display offered a row of LYNX kiosks loaded with the latest releases (and a few not yet in release) for the Lynx system. Atari provided game designers and staff members to help the new players get started, and to provide insight into the secrets of the games for experienced Lynxsters. I hate singling out people, but in this case it is really deserved - Louie Moskalski of Atari Entertainment was the "man who got things done" for Atari Entertainment. Gawd, I wish I had that level of energy during the show days, Great job Louie!

Hours prior to the actual opening of the show on Saturday, people were beginning to line up in anticipation of getting one of the free promotional items offered by Atari Entertainment and Atari Corp. As a matter of fact, when I stumbled down to the foyer of the convention center at 7:00 AM Saturday, there were already people in line waiting for the 10:00 general show opening.

I would estimate that there were more than 300 people waiting for the opening of the doors at 10:00 Saturday - the waiting line stretched from just outside the convention center, past the Quest nightclub and the gift shop, nearly to the front desk itself. The crowd was most patient, and the extra security that the hotel provided was not needed.

To ease the crowd situation somewhat, the Gaming Area in Grand Ballroom "B" was opened at 9:30 by the MilAtari crew. This enabled people to relax and have something to do prior to the actual opening of the show. I must interject that the MilAtari crew led by Lee Musial did just an OUTSTANDING job of handling their area - but this is no real surprise as they have been doing an excellent job of handling the computer gaming portion of the GenCon gaming fair for many years now. Sincere thanks to Clinton Smith of Atari Portable Entertainment newsletter for helping in the gaming area with the LYNX competitions.

The Chicago ComputerFest was the debut of the Lynx "Value Pack", which adds an AC Adapter, Game, ComLynx Cable and carrying case to the basic Lynx package - all for a very special price. The Lynx value packs sold so well during the show that Atari had to take back some of the units that were loaned to MilAtari for the gaming room so that customer orders could be filled! More than one Gameboy diehard had their mind changed by the "hands on" sessions with the Lynx. If Atari would set up a few manned Lynx kiosks on the weekends at malls around the Chicago area (Gurnee Mills, anyone?), they would move a ton of Lynx systems before Christmas.

The opening of the show was barely controlled pandemonium as you would expect - the exhibitors being VERY, VERY busy for the first few hours of the show. Advance ticket sales through local user groups eased the job of the ticket sales people, but attendees were still buying additional tickets at a furious pace all day Saturday.

Most of my time Saturday and Sunday was devoted to keeping the 48 general seminars humming; unfortunately, we had a couple of AV equipment failures that required projection equipment to be shuffled around from room to room so presenters would have what they needed. The presenters took it all with good humor, even those that were scheduled against more popular presentations that drew big crowds.

In addition to these more conventional "presentation" seminars, we offered a series of "instructional" seminars geared to teaching participants the basic and advanced techniques of page layout and desktop publishing on Atari systems. Atari loaned us enough equipment for 20 "hands on" workstations and instructor equipment; we provided a color LCD projection system so that all in attendance could see what the instructor was doing.

ISD Marketing provided master instructor Mario Georgiou to present Calamus classes, and SoftLogik provided the highly talented Dan Weiss to teach the secrets of PageStream. Although some balked at the \$15.00 materials cost for these 3-hour presentations, those that attended the sold-out sessions (SoftLogik scheduled a second Intro Class Saturday night to handle those that were on a waiting list and Tim working together at the show; the cross pollination can only do both "worlds" good.

I must say that our exhibitors were truly generous with their door prize donations - among them were the 105 MB HD unit donated by ABCO, the Migraph Hand scanners, and the TT030 Color system donated by Atari. A good estimate of the retail value of the goods given away would approach \$10,000.00.

Saturday night brought the Gala Chicago ComputerFest by Atari Banquet and MARC Excellence awards ceremony. The banquet had it's share of surprises (a fire alarm was pulled just prior to the actual start of the Banquet by one of the many Jerry Garcia fans in the hotel for a concert at the nearby Rosemont Horizon), but the biggest surprise was the outstanding turnout - we had to ask the hotel to bring additional tables in for latecomers! The formal portion of the program begun with the presentation of the first annual Midwest Atari Regional Council awards for excellence. The MARC award winners were selected for their outstanding contributions to the betterment of the Atari community by the officers of the previously mentioned 9 MARC member-groups.

MARC chairman Hank Vize gave the attendees a brief overview of the purpose and goals of MARC before the actual presentation. It was my pleasure to present Double Click Software, SoftLogik Publishing, and Codehead Software with their nicely enameled plaques as a reminder of their fine work. John Eidsvoog and Charles Johnson clowned on stage during the presentation, but the "table talk" afterwards revealed that both Charles and John were truly moved by the recognition of their efforts.

Next, Bob Brodie, Atari's spokesperson said a few short words, then introduced Atari's President - Mr. Greg Pratt. Mr. Pratt gave a very moving talk about the importance of everyone seated in the room as

"Atari's Business Partners" and outlined the immediate plan of attack for Atari in the domestic and international markets. Mr. Pratt's remarks gave the folks assembled a first-hand flavor of what Atari executives are thinking and planning for the immediate future. The assembled group apparently liked what they heard based on the standing ovation given Mr. Pratt and the assembled Atari guests.

After the banquet, most participants beat a path for the Double-Click or MilAtari sponsored cocktail parties which (I am told) went on very late.

One of the most gratifying things about hosting a national show of this nature is the cross-section of the Atari community that you meet. One of the more colorful groups in attendance at this show were the Electronic Music / MIDI folk. The music-industry personalities ranged the full spectrum from the dynamic Kest Carter-Morgan and the people of ASTMUM (Montreal Canada User Group), to the multi-talented Bob Lytle of Guitar Plus, to the beautiful Dana Byrd (redheads get my attention every time) of Hybrid Arts. Guitar Plus sponsored a series of "hands on" MIDI instructional seminars that were, unfortunately, sparsely attended. I guess that musicians don't really get cranking until later in the night on weekends, right Bob?

Press coverage of the show was outstanding, with John Jainschigg and Peter Donoso representing Atari Explorer with John Nagy representing AtariUser magazine, and an international contingent representing such far-flung places as Peru!

The one question that was on everyone's lips during and after the show was "will you do it again next year?". I must say that ball is firmly in Atari's court - LCACE, as the "little group that could", does not have the financial resources to handle the equipment, hotel, and advertising commitments that Atari was able to guarantee. On the other side of the coin, the physical and emotional demands on the LCACE staff were truly crushing, we are just now starting to recover from the strain of squeezing this puppy out; thinking about next year is just unbearable right now.

Will there be a Chicago ComputerFest by Atari 1992? If you think that there should be, you can help by sending a letter of thanks to Mr. Jack Tramiel or Mr. Greg Pratt of Atari Corporation for their sponsorship. Bob Brodie tells me that letters of this kind make a big difference in shaping Atari policy. Please take the time to make your opinion heard!

I feel badly that I was not able to spend more time with each of our exhibitors and participants - problem solving and unexpected situations kept me busy both days. When I finally did sit down on Sunday after breakdown, I developed severe verigo due to the my body not being in motion. I realize that this is a poor substitute for a personal handshake, but thanks to everyone who participated. I hope that you all enjoyed our efforts as much as it appeared you did.

For myself, after I catch up on a week's worth of sleep, I plan to get my guys together and buy them a beer, maybe two.

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\* CHICAGO COMPUTERFEST BY ATARI ACTION  
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Eyewitness Report by Steve Koselnik, LCACE

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Saturday 11-23-1991

At 8:00 am they were waiting in the halls for the Show to open at 10:00 am. The vendors were busy making final adjustments and finishing their booth setup. Atari Corporation had used two semi-trailers to ship systems and components for the exhibitors to use in their booths. Everyone was busy. At 9:30 am the pressure was on. Tickets were being taken for those who wished to enter the MilAtari Gaming Area. MilAtari sported two 16 ST computer MIDI rings setup for competition. ST and Lynx Systems were available for open gaming.

At 10:00 am the doors opened and the show filled with the attendees. The main show floor was made up of 58 booths. Attached ballrooms were used for the MilAtari gaming area with 25 tables and the 8-Bit area utilizing 15 tables. The 8-Bit area held surprises for most. Atari Corporation had used part of one of the semi-trailers to clear out remaining 8-Bit equipment at very low prices. As an example, 65XE Game Systems were going for \$25.00, also available at very low prices were trackballs and light pens.

The attached "D" concourse was used to house the four seminar rooms and the swap areas. Across the Ramada Hotel was the Plaza and Salon areas. The Plaza area was used to host the hands on Desktop Publishing classes given on Calamus and PageStream. SoftLogik scheduled an additional class to handle the overflow from the first class. Only six people showed up for the second class, but SoftLogik did not turn them down, they gave it anyway. The Salon area was used for the large presentations by Atari Corp.

By 11:00 am the Fest was in full swing. The hall was filling up, the first two seminars had started, a third was about to begin, the Calamus "Beginning Desktop Publishing" class had started, the 8-Bit area had people going crazy after the GOOD deals, the gamers were just finishing their first hour in the MilAtari gaming area, and the Swap area was going strong.

Atari had the ST Book in their booth and the Atari PC 386DX in the GENie booth. The Atari area was shared with the Entertainment Division. There were Lynx's everywhere. Some Lynx's had unreleased games in them for you to play. The whole design staff from the Entertainment division was there. Atari Computer division had over 25 people in from Sunnyvale. Don Thomas had a area set up just with all the latest Portfolio goodies.

The day continued to be very busy with seminars scheduled hourly until 4:00 pm. The official count was 1,700 attendees on Saturday. Vendors reported sales a bit slow, but Sunday was yet to come.

Saturday evening a Banquet was held in the Salon Area for over 150. Greg Pratt - President, Atari US, was the featured speaker. He talked

about Atari's marketing plans and the contract with GE for Atari computer repair service. The MARC Excellence Awards were awarded to Soft-Logik and CodeHead for their support of the User Groups, and Double Click for their program a week releases of public domain software.

Editors Note: See following article on the MARC awards.

Sunday 11-24-1991

Saturday night it started to storm as the Fest closed. Sunday continued with everything outside covered with ice and a very cold brisk wind. This apparently didn't stop some from attending the Computerfest. At 7:50 am there were a few early birds trying to find out what the days activities had to offer for them. The Computerfest opened at 10:00 am with a small crowd lined up and waiting to enter. The "Advanced Desktop Publishing Class" presented by SoftLogik started at 10:30 am. was sold out.

The Sunday Seminar schedule was full. Seminars started at 11:00 am. and ran hourly throughout the day. Most vendors said they were having a very good sales day even though the crowd was smaller than Saturday. A few vendors were sold out of product by 2:00 pm. Sunday. The official Sunday attendance was 675.

A TT was donated by Atari Corp. as a door prize and was won by a Tod Latam of the Windsor Atari Users Group.

The Volunteers and Officers of Lake County Atari Computer Enthusiasts wish to thank all those who attended the Computerfest.

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\* MARC ATARI EXCELLENCE AWARDS by Hank Vize  
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MARC Selects First recipients of the "MARC Atari Excellence Awards"

Last weekend, at the Chicago Computerfest, MARC awarded plaques to three developers that showed continued support to our beloved computer platform. The awards were not restricted to developers. Any and all computer events, Atari periodicals, software and hardware developments were considered.

The plaques were presented Saturday night at the Chicago Computerfest Banquet by Mike Brown of LCACE, the co-sponsor of this excellent event. Preceding Mike, was a brief explanation of MARC, its concept, and goals, presented by Hank Vize of EAUG.

The Midwest Atari Regional Council's first selection went to Soft-logik for introduction of PageStream 2.1 and its continued support of user groups by offering each registered User group two free copy's of their DTP program.

The second award went to DoubleClick Software for their public domain "Program of the Week" campaign. The weekly efforts to the benefit of the general Atari community are truly appreciated.

The final award went to Codehead Software. Dynamic duo, Charles Johnson

and John Eidsvoog, were selected for their improvements to their utility programs. Hotwire 3.0, Maxifile 3.0, and introduction of Multidesk Deluxe.

MARC was founded in February 1990 as a means to link local communications for ACE-St Louis, Eastside Atari User Group of Alton, IL, MDC-RCC Atari SIG and STar of Belleville, IL. The focus of the group was expanded shortly thereafter to a truly regional entity now serving 12 user groups in the midwest area. MARC's goal is to act as a common communications channel between the member groups, and from the member groups to the manufacturers including Atari. MARC is a non-profit organization and charges no dues to groups for membership in MARC.

User groups, Software and Hardware Developers, etc., can submit requests for information via GENie E-Mail to Hank Vize. GENie address: H.VIZE. Please consider supporting or joining this worthwhile endeavor.

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\* Z\*NET NEWSWIRE  
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#### CHICAGO ATARI SHOW NETS 2,300

Atari's first attempt at a co-op show with user groups was a success in Chicago last weekend, with over two thousand attending. Read the details in the eyewitness reports in this issue.

#### EYE SEE INC. OFFERS PC MARKET TO ST DEVELOPERS

A new corporation has been formed by Double Click Software and Rimik Enterprises, two Atari developers. Eye See, Inc. is intended to be a channel into the IBM PC marketplace for developers of Atari products. Venture capital is available for full scale marketing and world-wide representation of PC converted ST software. According to Rimik's Rich Betson, Eye See Inc. will allow ST developers to remain in the Atari market that they enjoy by allowing the PC market to fund them. Contact Eye See at 619-630-1217.

#### IAAD PRODUCT GUIDE TO EDUCATE NEW ATARI OWNERS

A 24 page two color booklet from the Independant Association of Atari Developers premiered at the Chicago Computerfest last weekend. An impressive layout of offerings of the many IAAD members, the book is a primer for showing the scope of available products for Atari computers. Of course, phone numbers and addresses of the developers are included. The booklet will be included with all new computers sold, and should go far to keep "Discovery" bundle buyers from using the machine for the proverbial doorstep. Atari Corp. paid for the production of the booklet in support of the IAAD.

#### ATARI BUNDLES AVAILABLE FOR SALE

The Discovery XTRA and Home Curriculum packages were available for sale at the Chicago show, and are in the Atari warehouses for delivery now. The bundles are to feature an upgradeable 520STe, Color Monitor, and a software selection worth over \$1,000 and sell for around \$600. The XTRA pack includes Sim City and other hot games, while the Family Curriculum goes far beyond education with a competent word processor, database, and

spreadsheet that many experienced users will recognize as mid and high line products.

#### ANTIC INC TO DISSOLVE BY JAN 1

Infamous for their closing of operations of START magazine without payment of authors, printers, and disk duplicators, Antic Publishing, Inc. is said to be planning to dissolve the corporation at year's end, 1991. The company solicited renewals on subscriptions (some \$80 and more) even after it announced the suspension of publishing, and has been unresponsive to subscriber inquiries. Insiders have said that START revenues were regularly diverted into the production of PC HOME JOURNAL, Antic's other publication, which will be spun off to a legally new and unrelated corporation as of January 1, 1992. The debts of START are apparently intended to die with the name ANTIC, but legal responsibility might be proven by lawsuits to survive into the new corporation. A development group has been researching the liabilities of producing a START MAGAZINE CD to include all of the text, graphics, and programs ever included in the magazine, but are worried that their efforts will only bring them lawsuits as well, regardless of contractual protections.

#### ATARI'S CD SHELVED; METADOS TO GO PUBLIC

According to Bill Rehbock, Director of Technical Services at Atari Corporation, the announced and expected CDAR505 will NOT be produced at any time soon. Intended for a fall 1991 release, the unit is really a Chinon CDX451, readily available at many dealers today. The sole Atari influence was to be the silkscreened name on the front panel and the METADOS driver software to be included. It now appears that these additions, along with Atari packaging, will drive the minimum price of the CD ROM players to about \$50 above what everyone else can get the drive for, making it a loss proposition for Atari. Now, Atari plans to promote the use of the 500+meg devices by encouraging production of disks and software by releasing METADOS into the community as freeware. This will enable any Atari user to buy any SCSI CD player and use it immediately on any TT, or with a host adaptor, on any ST. ICD is expected to shortly release a revised HOST software system that will allow their Advantage series of host adapters to address the CD devices without effort or confusion. Chinon CDX451 drives are currently available at prices as low as \$380 from discounters.

#### ATARI'S PAD COMPUTER BACKBURNED

Where's the STylus? Maybe gone. The pad-based ST that was said to be the future of computing and was at one time expected to be the "WOW" unit at COMDEX has been tabled by Atari. Market studies show that everyone is interested in pad computers, but nobody expects to buy one. Rather than offer a machine without a market, Atari is putting the project into mothballs until and unless the market shows that money is to be made. Despite the 98% accuracy of the outstanding Atari handwriting recognition software as compared to the 75% accuracy of most PC based units, the STylus is presently judged to be a novelty whose time has not yet come.

#### TT AND STE: "ATARI'S MAINSTAY FOR NEXT TWO YEARS"

Atari's President, Greg Pratt, said while addressing the banquet crowd at Chicago's Atari show last week that the new machines coming in 1992 from Atari will be shown at the Spring CeBIT show in Germany, and will be dazzling. However, he then added that the machines will then see a

12 to 18 month development before commercial availability, and that the current TT and Mega STe will be the mainstay of Atari for most of the next two years. This realistic comment throws cold water on some of the hopes of the Atari community who expected an Atari Falcon 68040 on their desks in 1992. A full transcript of Pratt's address will be included in next week's Z\*NET.

#### PLI TO ADD ATARI TO PRESTIGIOUS HARDWARE SUPPORT LINE

Atari's move to standardize their ports and accessories has born fruit in the closing of a support deal with PLI, billed as "the most trusted name in removable hard drive technology". Atari will be added to Apple and NeXT in the lines that PLI will offer Syquest technology removable drives, hard drives, rewritable optical library systems, and more. The sexy and tiny PLI boxes are as affordable as any in the market, and the Atari name and symbol will begin appearing on all PLI literature between those of Apple and NeXT. SCSI devices, the PLI units work instantly with a TT and Atari's HDX software, or with a host adaptor, on any Atari. CO-OP ads with PLI and Atari will begin appearing in Atari and other magazines in January. PLI, 47421 Bayside Parkway, Fremont CA 94538, 800-288-8754.

#### HYBRID ARTS GETS NEW CEO, OUTLOOK

After years of restriction in Atari support due to a CEO that appeared to have a grudge against it, Hybrid Arts is happy to announce that a new boss and a new outlook is allowing a new growth and support for Atari. One of the pioneers in MIDI software and hardware, Hybrid "fired" their old boss and replaced him with Chris Pelzar. The result is a complete turnaround of attitude, support, advertising, and development for the Atari platform. Genedit 2.0, an outstanding MIDI editor, was marketed many months ago in Germany, but was withheld from the US market by the old Hybrid. It was shown and sold to enthusiastic musicians last week at the Chicago show. Digital Master is also going over big, part of a new effort by Hybrid to sell what they have rather than what they thought they could eventually produce. Efforts have also begun in payment of royalties and fees that have been owed for years to some developers of Hybrid's early products. Hybrid Arts, 8522 National Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232, 310-841-0340.

#### FLASH II SHOWN, AVAILABLE IN JANUARY

You couldn't buy it yet, but a coupon offered at the Chicago Atari show will give a discount on "FLASH II", to be marketed by Missionware Software of Illinois. Flash II is a totally new product, not related in any way to the original and very popular FLASH terminal software that was sold by Antic Publishing. Rights to the name and appearance were bought by an Australian developer who has created an impressively updated clone. Loaded with new features and protocols, the new Flash will be familiar in operation to all the owners of the original. "Upgrade" discounts will be offered despite no real obligation to do so by the new company. It'll be well under \$50 when it is released, hopefully in January 1992. Missionware is doing the documentation, packaging, and worldwide marketing. 354 N. Winston Drive, Palatine, IL 60067-4132, 708-359-9565.

#### CRASWELL SHOWS, OFFERS 16 MILLION COLOR BOARD - \$400

Maker of AlberTT and ISAC resolution and color enhancement boards Jay Craswell brought his just-completed "LEONARDO 24" card to the Chicago

show. Using a standard monitor, it gives over 16 million colors on screen at once. To be eventually bundled and sold with Lexicor's software by Lexicor, Jay's company Dover Research offered a \$400 price for those few who buy the board now from him directly. The final price will be higher, but has not been set as yet. The pictures shown by Jay in the Atari booth were incredible. Unlike the AlberTT and ISAC boards which offer increased resolution and more colors available from a palette, the 24-bit Leonardo card works within the "normal" Atari resolution but offers all the colors at one time. More details to come.

## SONY, APPLE, MOTOROLA COMPUTERS

Sony, Apple and Motorola will link up to develop multi-media personal computers. The personal computers are part of the next generation of machines that will allow users to store and retrieve moving images, voices and data. Representatives of the three companies had no immediate comment on the report, although IBM, which recently announced an agreement with Apple, is expected to be a part of this joint development.

# IBM CUTS BACK

IBM Chairman John F. Akers announced further actions to streamline the company and outlined a plan to reshape IBM into an organization of increasingly independent businesses and companies. The streamlining action will primarily involve additional reductions in the company's worldwide workforce, resulting in a charge to earnings. The primary focus of the restructuring will be an additional worldwide workforce reduction of approximately 20,000 employees. This will result in a charge of about \$3 billion against fourth-quarter earnings. The restructuring actions are expected to result in savings of about \$1 billion in 1992 and about \$2 billion each year thereafter.

## Z\*NET ENTERTAINMENT UPDATE

W. Axl Rose has confirmed that rhythm guitarist Izzy Stradlin' has resigned from Guns N' Roses (GNR). According to Rose, the band and Stradlin' were "going in separate directions and he's not really into touring or video or anything like that."

Mercury Records and the members of Kiss, Gene Simmons, Paul Stanley and Bruce Kulick, today released the following statement: Eric Carr, our drummer for the past 11 years has died after a relentless and valiant battle against cancer. The end came Sunday night, Nov. 24, 1991.

Family and close friends, including Elton John, gathered Wednesday for the cremation of Freddie Mercury, the lead singer of the rock group Queen, who died of AIDS during the weekend. Wreaths lined the entrance of the West London Crematorium where a 25- minute private service was conducted by two Parsee priests.

[illegible]

Date: 16 Nov 91 20:47:42 GMT

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>From: ....transfer!bu.edu!bucsf.bu.edu!harryk@arizona.edu
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Subject: MultiGEM

Well, I just received MultiGEM and I'm very *\*very\** impressed...

Guys (listen Greg and Richard), this beast blows MultiFinder away.. it does everything MultiFinder does, plus that you can specify a list of programs with each program running in a different configuration. For each program you can set the following:

- max amount of memory to be used by the program
- if the app is a desktop alternative or a shell you can tell MultiGEM to unload the parent every time a child is launched, and load it back after the child has terminated (save memory space)
- some programs like demos, mac/pc emulators, games, etc replace completely the current contents of memory and they take complete control of the system...you can have MultiGEM to warn you every time you try to run such a program so you can save your work
- you can set up to 6 autostart programs (to be loaded automatically at boottime), and you can even specify data files to be read by these progs
- any program can be set to execute in Single-Mode...meaning that when this program runs all others progs stop multitasking (but remain resident in memory)

Furthermore, TOS and TTP programs are run in their own GEM window, accessories are executed by just double-clicking on their icons (as if they were normal programs)...you can still have accessories loaded normally in the Desk menu but then you limit the number of applications you can multitask....

MultiGEM requires TOS 1.2 or later and it's said to be compatible with most applications....

However I haven't managed to marry it with Gemini successfully...during installation MultiGEM says that Gemini has to be autostarted from the GEM desktop...but I think it assumes I have TOS 1.4 or later...alas, I have TOS 1.2 and I tried to "autostart" Gemini with "startgem.prg" through superboot...although they both run successfully (MultiGEM *\*after\** startgem) while inside Gemini I had several problems ... and try quitting Gemini resulted in system freezing

Does any of our german friends have a solution for my problem?  
Unfortunately the manual (which is not lengthy at all) does say anything about alternative desktop programs and MultiGEM.

/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\

Date: 18 Nov 91 17:59:42 GMT

>From: ...mips!apple!fernwood!portal!atari!kbad@arizona.edu

Subject: FSMGDOS - GDOS

(Gerald Greenberg) writes:

|> I am currently using WordUp3 and Turbojet drivers for an HP Deskjet

FSMGDOS requires its own drivers because of the new features of scalable fonts. Drivers are supplied with FSMGDOS for the following printers: DeskJet 500, Epson FX80, HP LaserJet, Star NB15, NEC P-series, NX1000, Oki 120, HP PaintJet, SLM804, SMM804, Canon BubbleJet. Of course these drivers will work with printers compatible with those above. Other printer drivers are also available.

(Greg Granger) writes:

| [...]

| So much for the famed FSM GDOS. You need \*at least\* 2.5 megs to run it.

Not true. With some creative configuration, you can run FSMGDOS in a 1 meg machine. All you have to do is use the FSM CPX to set the font caches small enough for your machine. You obviously can't print to an Atari laser printer, but other printers use spooling so they don't require a full-page buffer in memory. On the other hand, a hard disk is pretty much required if you want to use scalable fonts.

If memory is really really tight, you can use FONTGDOS. Smaller than FSMGDOS, this new version of GDOS gives you unlimited bitmap font availability. It's also more flexible and MUCH faster than older GDOS versions.

--

```
||| Ken Badertscher (ames!atari!kbad)
||| Atari Corp. System Software Engine
/ | \ #include <disclaimer>
```

/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\

Date: 19 Nov 91 04:36:54 GMT

>From: psinntp!ultb!ritvax.isc.rit.edu!JGM8260@uunet.uu.net

Subject: More Atari Sales Info

Again, more information you would never have wanted to know if I didn't post it :

Atari sales, 1989 :

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European : 73%

N. Amer. : 18%

Exports : 4%

Other : 5%

Atari sales, 1990

-----

European: 83%

N. Amer.: 11%

Exports : 3%

Other : 3%

Because of so much overseas sale, Atari's profit/loss also depends a lot on exchange rate fluctuation .....

Can't prove it or post it as yet, but I came across something, I believe a SEC filing or something of that nature, where Atari mentions "table-top game consoles" for release in the first quarter(?) of 1992 .... guess the Jaguar isn't all rumor after all ..... Unless they've socketed a 68030 into the 2600 VCS machines .....

-Joe

/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\

Date: 19 Nov 91 08:15:41 GMT

>From: ....uhccux!uhunix.uhcc.Hawaii.Edu!jww@ames.arpa (Jack W. Wine)  
Subject: Motorola/Atari article

There was mention earlier of a Computer Design article about Atari's use of Motorola processors in their present and planned computer/game systems. The article in the Oct. '91 issue deals with the theme of RISC processors providing tough competition for Motorola in the embedded control market. The authors are Jeff Child and Dave Wilson.

The sections regarding Atari and some of the Motorola processors being considered/used by Atari are excerpted.

----- Begin article...

"RISC Champions Challenge Motorola In Embedded Control"

/ \  
/ -- \  
/ \ S the dark ages of CISC-based embedded control draws to a close, the curtain seems certain to rise on the RISC renaissance. But CISC is unwilling to abdicate it's throne. Instead of playing dead, it produces many heir willing to fight for the future of CISC in embedded control.

[The right panel illustrates a jousting match with Motorola as a lone knight astride a stallion in elaborate panoply, readying a lance against a line of knights who wield weapons and shields bearing their corporate insignia.]

The assault on the 68000 family is coming from RISC-based embedded machines that promise a two- to five-time performance improvement at a similar cost. To counter this attack on its design base, Motorola has dressed up and stripped down the 68000 in an attempt to make it appeal to a broader audience. Currently, the company offers an integrated 32-bit microcontroller family, the 68300, as well as a cost reduced family of derivatives, dubbed the 68EC000 series. The result is a range of processors that offer "near" 68K software compatibility at prices that will eventually start at \$1.

Through the EC series of processors, Motorola is trying to accelerate the adoption rate of 68000 family processors in embedded system designs. Cost-reduced EC versions are becoming available just month after the mainstay 680X0 processor line. The company has already announced EC versions of the 020, 030 and 040, and has divulged that an EC050 will be available six months after the introduction of the 050.

Motorola currently offers the 68EC030--an 030 without an on-chip MMU. Next will come the EC040, a 040 derivative processor without the MMU or floating-point unit. Somewhere in between the 040 and EC040 will be a processor that may incorporate the MMU, but not the FPU, or vice versa.

Rather than strip functions, the 68300 processor family lets Motorola's chip designers add modular microcontroller peripherals to the 68000 architecture via an on-chip bus. In addition to a 68020 core, the 68300 series sports smart peripherals that can help off-load tasks from the core processor. One example is the timer processor unit (TPU) found on the 68332. The CPU can assign tasks to the TPU, and the timer controls the task to completion, only then interrupting the CPU. This approach minimizes the interruptions to the CPU, freeing it to perform other functions.

[Parts skipped about Houston Instruments and other companies using

68Ks.]

Like Houston Instruments, Atari has used the 68000 as a workhorse processor for years. But unlike Houston Instruments, Atari's game applications could use all of the power that dedicated RISC processors could deliver--if only they were less expensive. Presently, a common Atari design approach uses a 680X0 as a system controller, talking across a common bus to several pipelined digital signal processing (DSP) chips that perform dedicated graphics operations--matrix, perspective, translation, clipping and filling calculations. The results of the DSP chip calculations are fed to a common frame buffer, where a Texas Instruments TMS34010 performs the graphics drawing function.

The 68EC020, an EC part is now being designed into a new Atari arcade game. The EC020 has helped Atari improve the graphics performance of the system. "The removal of the MMU wasn't critical in our application," explains Richard Miller, Atari's vice-president of engineering. "What helped was the reduction in the processor cycle time that meant memory accesses were preformed faster. For a standard operation like a memory fetch, a 68K takes about four cycles. The EC020 brings that down to three," he says. That feature helped improve the graphics performance. Having previously used the 020, Miller said it was easy to use the EC020. "Even though Motorola added a couple of new instructions in the instruction set," he explains.

Beyond the EC020, Miller admits that he's interested in RISC. "But we're limited in the prices we can charge for our products. We have to go to the lower end for processors," he says. "typically, we max out the capability of whatever system we design. What happens is that the programmers have to write some of the key software routines in assembly language. The big benefit we would get out of RISC is that our programmer can write code in C, saving them the time of having to optimize the code. It's a question of time-to-market and being more efficient with the design staff," he concludes.

Atari has looked at a number of RISC processors. "But to move over to RISC, the price/performance would have to be there," say Miller. "At present, most RISC solutions aren't quite where we would like them." Another concern Miller raises is the availability, quality and cost of development systems, languages and compilers. "Poor to good," is how Miller describes them. "It seems like the best processors that are being supported by tools are in the PC family, and that's not really suitable for our particular applications," he adds.

----- End article

Something that isn't clear in the article is whether Atari will apply their game design to their ST/TT systems. I'm also not sure if the "arcade game" actually was something for the home. Someone posted that a Mega STe with a 68020 was being designed, but it seems likely that it will use a 68300 series chip. And if Atari is looking for a RISC chip that is cheap, then the PgC 7600 deserves a look, because it is 200 mip/\$20. I don't have the address for Sinclair Research/PgC Ltd/Taos located in Cambridge, U.K., but I would trade a can of macadamia nuts for the information.

/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\/\

Date: 19 Nov 91 08:30:38 GMT

>From: ....uhccux!uhunix.uhcc.Hawaii.Edu!jww@ames.arpa (Jack W. Wine)

Subject: ST ads in mags

Although Atari may not advertise much, there's still some indication of their presence in Japan. The October '91 issue of Ascii magazine has an ad for two types of 1040 STe music packages, the "Midia Pack Alpha" and the "Midia Pack SL/2." The bundle consists of a 1 MB STe w/ the C-Lab Notator ALPHA or a 2 MB STe w/ the Notator SL (Ver. 3.1). Also included with the packages is an SM-124 monitor. The price for the systems sounds very high; the "Pack Alpha" costs about \$1400 and the "Pack SL/2" costs about \$2000!

I don't know anything about MIDI software, but the prices seem too high, especially when the same issue has ads with Mac Classic packages (2 MB, 45 MB internal HD) selling for about \$1500.

Besides the Mac, Amiga and Atari, there is another 68K-based machine >from Sharp called the X68000 and they recently introduced an enhanced version called the X68000 XVI ("ex vee eye"). Some of its features are a 16 Mhz 68000, 1024x1024 display w/ 16 colors (768x512 w/ 65,636 colors), hardware sprite support, 8 voice 8 octave AD PCM and FM stereo sound, and video digitisation capability. It runs with an OS called SX-Window and also has OS-9 as an option. A two-drive system with a 14" color monitor sells for about \$2500.

The ad for the Sharp XVI seems to be directed toward the rebel, because it depicts a guy in half-shadow (looking more grim than happy :| ) and it touts the 16 Mhz speed and performance of the Motorola 68000 CPU everywhere. The actual computer is housed in a dark, "Manhattan-style" mini twin-tower case. I know it won't be sold outside of Japan, but it would have provided incentive for the other companies to deliver innovative products (though I'm not sure why Sharp doesn't have a 68020/30 version).

If there's something to rebel against, it's the stranglehold of NEC who holds about 50% of the PC market with its line of 98-series systems which are based on 80x86 processors. To break NEC's dominance, IBM Japan formed the Open Architecture Developers Group (OADG) to which 23 manufacturers like Hitachi, Toshiba and Sony have joined. Their goal is to provide systems that are compatible with each other, like the IBM compatibles that are mostly made for export. Current IBM ads proclaim WAO ("We are open"), but only show machines like the PS/2 50Z which is based on an ancient 80286 processor. (There are also ads which have an Intel slogan "Intel in it," which makes it sound like they are deep in it!)

Ascii also has an article about computer magazines in Europe and the pictures of German shop windows show lots of stuff! Under the heading of "Das Magazine fur aktive PC-anwender," there are mags like Personal Computer World, ST Magazin, c't, Kick Start, Amiga, 64'er, 128'er, 68000'er, (er 49'er?), a mag with a dark title but shows a /|\ ("Fuji"), alles uber, VMEbus, Power Play, etc, besides the well-known American mags. I don't understand why U.S. shops don't have that kind of variety!

/\\//\\//\\//\\//\\//\\//\\

Date: 19 Nov 91 21:51:06 GMT

>From: .....nucsr1!tellab5!chinet!saj@arizona.edu (Stephen Jacobs)

Subject: Atari earnings

Atari released their quarterly earnings report last week. The quick summary looked cleaner than any report of theirs in the last 18 months. They reported 3 cents a share earnings for the quarter. This is right in line with the \$1.75-or-so stock price and a modest amount of optimism.

Regarding other recent postings on Atari's business: while Papa Jack (saves having to spell THAT NAME) is technically not an insider, and The holdings of Warner Communications are technically not in the hands of insiders, for any practical purpose they really should be counted as insider holdings. That means Atari is about 80% owned by insiders, so those of us who own a few Atari shares really are just spectators.

/\\//\\//\\//\\//\\//\\//\\

Date: Fri, 22 Nov 1991 21:46:35 -0600 (CST)  
>From: Z\_RYMALJL@CCSVAX.SFASU.EDU (Larry Rymal)  
Subject: Info-Atari16 Digest V91 #612

Jason at jdemlow@andy.bgsu.edu asks:  
>I'm looking for a monochrome SM124 monitor or equivalent and either a  
>good laser (Atari model is fine) or ink jet printer.

A great equivalent replacement for the SM124 is the NEC GS2A white phosphor multisync. I have used one for three years on both my Atari ST and more recently on my Macintosh LC and it works great on either platform.

Ink Jet printer recommendations from here would be the Hewlett Packard DeskJet, any model. Not only does it work great with the ST \*and\* the Mac, but also has a vast library of utilities located on the various nets. I have had my old tried and true DeskJet "Classic" ever since the first month it was released (never upgraded) and am still quite happy.

Larry Rymal <Z\_RYMALJL@CCSVAX.SFASU.EDU>|>ST & Mac Users of East Texas<|  
Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas

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\* PERUSING GENIE Compiled by EK  
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Games on the Mega STE and TT  
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Atari-ST RoundTable  
Category 9, Topic 28

Message 53                    Wed Nov 27, 1991  
MIKE-FULTON                    at 04:36 EST

I saw a few older messages that indicated some confusion about why some games would work on a TT030 or Mega STE and why some games will not. I think I can offer a little insight here which may help.

Some games use a standard GEMDOS-readable format. These games have an AUTO folder which is supposed to get executed at boot time. We'll call these games Category 1.

Some games do not use a standard GEMDOS directory format, and therefore do not have files and folders that GEMDOS can understand. These games do not have AUTO folders. Instead, they have a small amount of executable code on the very first sector of the disk, which is called the boot sector. We'll call these games Category 2.

When \_any\_ Atari TOS-based machine is booted, the system looks at the boot sector of drive A to see if it is executable. If it is, then it loads it and gives control to the program in it. This program can either do something and give control back, or keep control altogether.

With Category 2 games, the program on the boot sector primarily loads a larger program from the disk which loads the rest of the game.

However, if the boot sector on drive A is not executable, then the system looks for a Drive C boot sector before continuing to boot from drive A. On a Mega STE and TT030, however, there is a built-in delay period before this happens. This is designed to give hard disk drives time to come up to speed, so that the boot sector will be accessible when the system asks for it.

Here's where the problem occurs, but it's easy to work around. On the Spectrum Holobyte games, they use the regular GEMDOS-style disk format with an AUTO folder. However, if you're on a TT030 or Mega STE with a built-in hard disk, once the hard disk is up to speed, then the system isn't normally going to end up booting from a floppy disk that fits in Category 1.

There are three ways around this (at least).

First, hitting a key during the delay period ends it, even if the hard disk is not up to speed. And if the hard disk is not up to speed, then the system will boot from floppy. Generally, if you hit a key within the first five seconds after turning on the machine, you are guaranteed to not have the hard disk up to speed yet.

Second, with the Atari Hard Disk Driver, holding down the Alternate key during booting will disable it, and the system will boot from floppy instead. (They may use a different keystroke, but all non-Atari hard disk drivers should have a similar feature.)

Third, there is a program in the library named NOROACH. It writes out a small program to the boot sector of a floppy disk, but without affecting the GEMDOS information stored there.

The boot sector program written out to the floppy does two things. First, it displays an icon in the top right corner of the screen when you boot. This lets you know that there is no virus on your disk (because the icon takes up the space where a virus would go). Second,

it allows you to customize the delay period on a TT030 or Mega STE, so you don't have to hit a key to abort the delay period.

Normally, NOROACH is used to set the delay to just slightly more than how long your hard disk takes to come up to speed (most hard disks take 10-25 seconds). However, it could also be used to set the delay to just 1 second, insuring that your hard disk won't be ready (if booting from power-off) and that the system will therefore boot from floppy.

This method will work in many cases but it carries a warning: Make sure your disk doesn't already have some information in the boot sector that the game depends upon, and that the disk does indeed have an AUTO folder. Also, do this on a backup of your original disks only. (Most disks which are eligible for this method will probably not be copy protected.)

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By the way, I found a method from Cary Gee upstairs to get FOTI up and going on my TT030. I'd tried before without success. Since I've done it this way, I have had no problems with using it from the hard disk, and it may also work on a Mega STE.

First, have nothing active in the AUTO folder, and NO desk accessories. Nada. Zip. Zilch. I don't care what it does. Leave things active at your own risk.

Second, put the machine in ST-low rez.

Third, turn the 68030 cache off. (I'd try 8mhz, with no RAM cache on a Mega STE)

Fourth, run the program.

Fifth, have a blast. The program is VERY smooth on a TT030. Screen updates are marvelous.

MIke

Future multitasking on the ST

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Atari-ST RoundTable  
Category 14, Topic 13  
Message 86 Tue Nov 26, 1991  
TOWNS [John@Atari] at 15:23 EST

I would like to respond to a couple of the comments here.

1. Atari hasn't specifically said that 68000 multi-tasking is out of the question. I believe that we have said that we are looking into the possibility of multi-tasking on 68000 machines and we are working on multi-tasking in general. However, we are not and have not done anything specific to limit multi-tasking to the 68030.
2. The 68000 doesn't have the ability to do hardware memory protection. This is really needed to do multitasking. Otherwise, programs can and do occasionally step all over each other.

3. I don't believe a decision has been made. I think we will evaluate the situation and see what we can do.
4. Multi-tasking on a 8Mhz 68000 is going to be VERY slow. As they say, be careful what you ask for.. you may get it! ;-)

I will let you know when I hear more on the subject.

-- John Townsend, Atari Corp.

32meg TT-RAM board  
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Atari ST-Roundtable

Category 28, Topic 13

Message 78 Fri Nov 22, 1991

K.BROOKS1 [New Horizon] at 01:08 EST

Ok people.....the board is HERE NOW!! The GE Soft TT RAM board arrived and is redesigned from what Jim Allen saw this fall. The layout is more organized. It has vertical SIMM panel slots with two sets of banks identified in the literature as Banks 1 & 2. These are used in varying RAM configurations for the 4Mb-8Mb-16Mb-20Mb and 32Mb setups. It is a honey of a board. Note from GE Soft \*DO NOT USE SIEMENS 4MBx8pin or 4MBx9pin SIMMS. Recommended RAM is Samsung or Toshiba as these are the units GE Soft has reliably tested with the board. Not sure why a TI or NEC or Hyundai etc wouldn't work but Samsung and Toshiba are apparently guaranteed to work properly. We've brought in some page-mode RAM and nibble-mode to try in the board. We'll benchmark the TT using both and let you know the results. We're also sourcing RAM prices in a variety of locations. Maybe some of you are interested in trying mail-order RAM but not me when I've got that much \$\$\$ wrapped up in the board and the TT - I don't want anything going south because I used the wrong SIMMs.

The board is larger than the Atari unit. On earlier TT's it is necessary to alter the metal RF shielding to go over the end of the board with the RAM installed. You must also put down non-conductive cardboard (I prefer non-static plastic) between the bottom of the board and the larger metal shielding so there's no chance of shorting the ends of the pins. Newer TT's with the painted RF shielding should have no problem whatsoever with installation.

We'll be posting new, confirmed prices for the populated boards very shortly as soon as the selected RAM suppliers get back to us with pricing - again its hard to pin down good prices when we have no idea of quantity yet. If you have a TT and want to go this avenue to get up to 42Mb of RAM on board (ST/TT combined), then let us know....see CAT 4/ TOPic 19 for details.

More by this weekend. Any questions, let us know here or over in CAT 4 or by EMail to myself or Bruce (B.KLASSEN) and keep in mind GE Soft tells us the boards will go out of stock very quickly on the next production run as those European folk snap them up quickly! Nuff said I hope.... ...if ya wants one, speak up sharply!

Keith Brooks New Horizon Computer Systems Ltd. Calgary, Alberta  
Telephone - 403-225-1160 (M.S.T.) FAXsimile - 403-271-1398

Flash 2

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Atari-ST RoundTable

Category 8, Topic 5

Message 72 Wed Nov 27, 1991

J.TRAUTSCHOL [jtrautscho] at 21:00 EST

Hi all!

(My ears were burning...)

Yes, we did show Flash 2 at last weekends Chicago ComputerFest and the interest in it was just short of fantastic.

We have not yet announced a release date. Earlier we had hoped for a release around the middle of December, but I doubt that we'll make it by then. Quite honestly, it's looking to be closer to the end of January.. possibly February.

The one thing we definitely want to do is to make as sure as humanly possible that there are no bugs floating around and that the manual is complete. We figure that you'd rather wait a few extra months than get a buggy product!

And what Jonsey said is true...we've got a slew of beta testers banging away not only at the various emulation modes but at the basic program itself. We want to make sure that it runs on all ST/TT machines. (You ought to see my office...I've got a 1040ST, 1040STe, Mega STe and TT sitting here just trying to break the program!)

Once the program is released, we'll open up a special topic for Flash 2 to answer all of your questions. For now though, if you didn't attend the show and would like to latch on to the information we handed out about the program, I'd be more than happy to send you an information sheet. Just send me a SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope) and I'll get you the promotional literature as well as a form for latching on to our "show special"!

Our address is:           Missionware Software  
                          354 N. Winston Drive  
                          Palatine, IL 60067-4132

Thanks for your interest!

BTW...the reason we haven't opened a topic on it yet is purely time. We are literally working around the clock trying to get the program ready and that leaves little time for answering questions. Thanks in advance for your patience. I will try to answer as many questions as humanly possible though!

And for those that are curious...the program is a brand new program by a brand new author down in Australia by the name of Paul Nicholls. He's a part of Sunsoft Systems Pty Ltd. Missionware Software is writing the manual and will be handling worldwide distribution.

- John T.

News from the Chicago Computerfest

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Atari-ST RoundTable

Category 11, Topic 10

Message 366 Mon Nov 25, 1991

D.A.BRUMLEVE [kidprgs] at 19:09 EST

I want to thank the folks from LCACE, the legions of volunteers from other participating clubs, and Atari for the Chicago ComputerFest this weekend! It was a very unusual fest indeed...So what was different, you ask?

I'll tell you! First of all, the show had been promoted to the general public, and at least a portion of the general public showed up! There were radio ads and promotions (Lynx give-aways) before the show. Many devoted 8-bit, ST/TT, Portfolio, and Lynx users did come, but we also met many people who didn't know Atari made computers, who came to find out about desktop publishing in general, to play in the game contests, etc. Since non-users did come, I think it's safe to assume that other non-users also heard the ads and thus grew in Atari awareness. There are pros and cons to a mixed audience such as this, but it was most gratifying to see new users walking off with a Discovery Pack or Family Curriculum bundle.

Did I say "bundle"? Sure did! Atari brought their new hardware/software bundles (adopted from Atari UK) for participating dealers to sell in their booths. I was disappointed that the STBook was not yet ready for sale, but they did have one for show-goers to play with in the professional display stand area. This area used the same workstations that have adorned the Atari displays in professional trade exhibitions such as Comdex and CEPS. Various professional "solutions" were shown there.

Most fests I've been to offer demonstration-type seminars: a developer presents his product(s) to the audience, takes questions from the audience, sings Neil Young tunes, and provides insights on his experience in the Atari marketplace. This show had seminars like those, but it also had training workshops, opportunities for people to gain skills in a hands-on situation with an expert teacher. In this case, the training sessions dealt with desktop publishing with Calamus and PageStream. These classes were so popular that they even had to add an additional session of the beginning PageStream class! I wish I had been free to attend one myself. While I have seen the opportunity for education at other shows, especially WAACE, this is the first time I've seen it formalized in the form of workshops. It would be great to see more of these kinds of seminars covering a wide variety of interest areas.

Atari brought truckloads of equipment, and part of this included Atari-related paraphenalia. I'm a paraphenalia freak myself. I collect buttons and patches and stickers and mugs and balloons and pins and pens and hats and anything that has the Atari logo. While the show-goers weren't treated to quite that much variety, there were two kinds of shoulder patches, balsa planes, copies of Atari Explorer...Plenty of "free" stuff for the price of admission. (For a small fee, I picked up a nifty Atari pin at the EAUG user group booth, too.)

Atari brought an amazing amount of equipment for use by developers, for sale by dealers, and for door prizes. This is the first time I remember

a grand prize as exotic and expensive as the TT. But it's also the first show I remember at which 8-bit XEs were given away as prizes courtesy of Atari. Atari had cleared a warehouse of all sorts of 8-bit equipment, and devoted 8-biters had a veritable feast.

Atari and the IAAD debuted a joint venture at this show. Participating IAAD members had contributed information on their products which was published by Atari (via Atari Explorer) to help inform the public on software and hardware products available to support Atari's ST/TT series. These brochures were available at the main entrance and at the Atari Explorer booth.

It really was a show for "firsts". Greg Pratt spoke at the banquet Saturday night. Now, I admit it's probably not the first time Greg Pratt has given a speech, but it's the first time I've heard him give one, and that was surely true also for most of the people in the room. It was also the first banquet I've attended that was preceded by a fire drill, complete with alarm and yellow-coated firemen.

OK, it wasn't the first show at which the Midwest Atari Regional Council had been mentioned. In fact, back at the MIST show in Indianapolis in the summer, MARC organizers had been in evidence. They had held a meeting for interested groups at that time. But the Chicago ComputerFest was the first show at which this new coalition of users groups in my area offered their "MARC Excellence Awards"! Nifty plaques were awarded to the CodeHeads, Double-Click, and SoftLogik. Congratulations to the excellent winners! [Say, any group in our general midwest region who is interested in learning more about MARC, please contact H.VIZE (Hank) or W.LORING1 (Bill) here on GENie.]

There were disappointments (no remote control in my hotel room!), glitches, no-shows, but my overall impression of the show is one of warm enthusiasm. Over half the members of my own user group attended, and all were glad they had. One of our main MIDI-enthusiasts spent Saturday talking to Roland's representatives. One member won a t-shirt from OPI. Another won one of those Atari XEs and a computer toolkit. One brought his family and concentrated on the gaming areas. Another friend claimed to have seen and done everything; I don't really think this was possible. ;-)

I brought my sister along to this show as I sometimes do. She's a computerphobic from way back, but she really got into this show. She strutted around in her ComputerFest shirt, helped me lug my equipment, attended the banquet and enjoyed it! I had my educational consultant on hand tending my booth, so I was free to do some shopping myself.

While I'm on this subject, I should mention the well-planned show program. The LCACE desktop publishers did a fine job, from the color scheme selected (blue on gray) to the arrangement of the segments. Believe me, my ad's appearance on the inside front cover has no bearing on this judgment. ;-)

I debuted my Learning Games Packet, a collection of 10 mainly pd/shareware instructional programs. I also debuted my fuji rubber stamps in the guise of "instant tattoos". We offered a one-time tatooing free of charge; to maintain the effect, customers would just have to shell out for the actual rubber stamp. Didn't sell very many of 'em, but I sure did see a lot of skin!

Weird, fun show! Thanks to Mike, Larry, JJ, Joe, and all the LCACE and

other volunteers! Thanks to Mr. Pratt (somehow, I just can't quite say "Greg" here ;-), Bill, Bob, John J. and all the Atari crew! Same time, next year?

--D.A. Brumleve

Member, IAAD, speaking for herself but just pointing that out in case somebody wonders what the IAAD is and wants to ask me

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Atari-ST RoundTable

Category 11, Topic 10

Message 369 Tue Nov 26, 1991

JMGSOFT [George @ JMG] at 00:11 EST

David and I got back this morning from Chicago (for some insane sort of reason, David decided to check out last night and spend the entire night driving back home, a good 8 hours in normal weather; with the blowing snow and iced roads, it took over 10 hours).

I must give a big thanks and "good job" to both LCACE and Atari, each did a terrific job in putting this show together. Well organized, lots going on, and Atari support to an extent I've never seen before.

It is a pity about the snowy, blustery weather on Sunday, many think turnout would have been more with a little nicer day. Still, turnout, especially on Saturday, was quite good, and there were lots of interesting people to talk to.

We ourselves managed to show a few firsts at a trade show, and impressed a lot of people by showing them new things that they didn't know Atari's could do. Among our list of new things was demonstrating HyperLINK running on a network, in this case between a TT and Mega STE. We were showing loading applications and accessing databases over the network, including file sharing. To my knowledge, this is the first "regular" Atari application to use network database features if present, supporting Atari's new file and record locking specifications. The network driver we were using was Universal Network, also being shown at the A&D Software booth at the show, and it performed very well indeed.

Another show first for us was being able to show off HyperLINK running on a large screen monitor, in this case a TTM194 19" screen. Sure, we had ordinary machines and monitors showing as well (HyperLINK was running on a Stacy, a MegaSTE, and two TT's at our booth), but a large screen monitor shows off some of HyperLINK's features even better. We were able to show five or six things going on at the same time in different HyperLINK windows.

And the Chicago show also represented the introduction of our latest version of HyperLINK, 1.6, and our new "point and click and drag" report generator. In the end, our demos were very well received and sales were pretty good too.

A final thanks to everyone who dropped by, whether to buy a copy, to see a demo, or just to say hi. It was a fun show for both David and myself.

In this case, I can't say that much about the rest of the show, since most of my time was spent in our own booth, but from my brief wanderings I can say without hesitation that anyone who missed this show missed one of the most diversified, impressive displays of ST software and stuff in North America to date.

As this was the last show of the season, David and I can now get back to every day sort of work (putting out a new newsletter, adding to our manual, putting some more demos together, etc); however I look forward to seeing everyone sometime next year.

-- George @ JMG Software.

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